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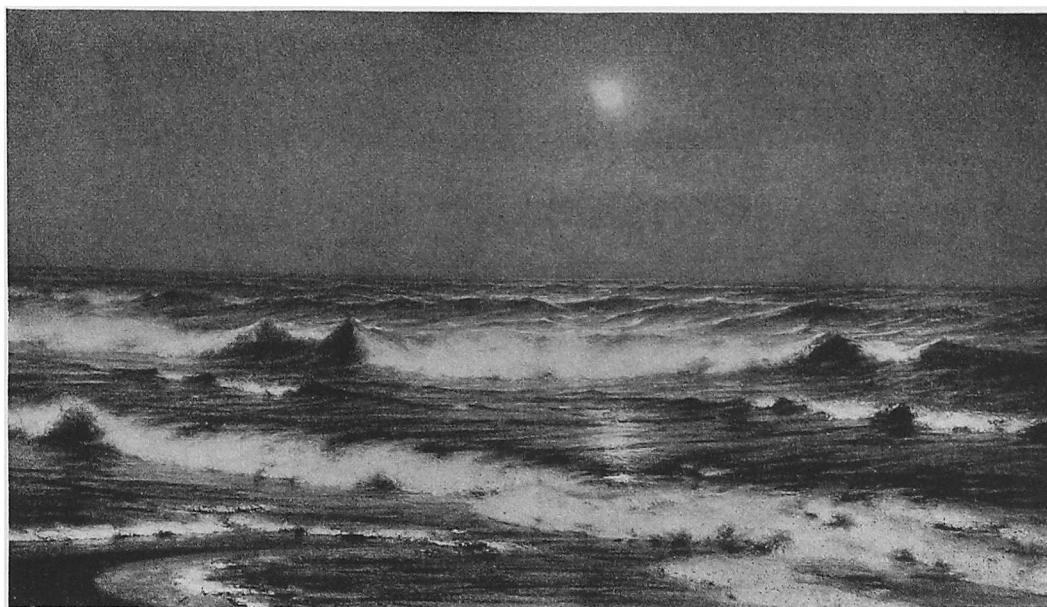
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MOON-FOAM

—By Alexander Harrison

Department of Art Study

With an Analysis of the University-Extension Course of Art

By THE EDITOR

SOME years ago the FINE ARTS JOURNAL became affiliated with the National Art Society and was adopted by this institution as its official organ. The literature of this Society, having been chosen with the utmost discrimination for the use of study circles in clubs, has been found most comprehensive and instructive and it has therefore been decided upon that this magazine shall publish a series of selected chapters from the course on "*The Fine Arts*."

Those who have taken up the National Art Society work and have these beautiful volumes in their libraries will find this a happy opportunity to review the course with the assistance of suggestions and comments by the editorial staff of the FINE ARTS JOURNAL. To those who are unacquainted with "*The Fine Arts*" we can offer nothing better than these monographs which have been carefully com-

pared and represent the opinions of the foremost critics and the best thought of the day upon these topics. Selections of chapters will be judiciously made and reproduced in part from time to time so as to cover the subject in a brief manner, but as well balanced and complete as possible.

The first of this series of articles, which follows, is by Russell Sturgis, A. M., Ph. D., and treats of the *technique and principles of visual art*. It will be found to be analytical without being pedantic, or obtuse, and to present a clear idea of the subject, without going so far into detail as to become tiresome.

Particular stress must be laid upon what the author has to say in regard to the language of art, for he has hit upon a fortunate manner of expressing an idea which is rather difficult to convey. Most of us who do not paint or model are not artistically-minded. We are

intellectual, emotional, religious, philosophical, mechanical or literary-minded, according to our temperament, age and training. Therefore, we all see in the same pictures different things which do or do not please, according to the standpoint from which the work is observed. As the author has remarked, we translate the artist's ideas into our own language when it would afford us a better understanding of his offerings should we endeavor to learn to read and comprehend his language. For, outside of the beauty of the main theme or message of a picture, or a statue, there are technical beauties that are like the fine phrasing of music in its more intricate passages, or the noble harmony and dignity of the perfect English of a great poet. To acquire a familiarity with the language of art is therefore of the utmost importance to one who would truly understand and appreciate it to the fullest possible extent.

Dr. Sturgis' remarks upon sculpture will be found most illuminating, explaining away, as they do, many things that have puzzled the uninitiated from time immemorial. No one can have failed to have observed the pleasure which uninformed people often derive from squinting quizzically at a work of art and deciding that one leg is longer than the other, or arriving at some similar conclusion relative to the bad drawing or modeling of the artist. The joy of believing one's self gifted with a better eye than men who have made a life study of seeing and recording form and color is about the only delight which some people derive from the contemplation of a work of art.

It should, however, require very little reflection to convince one that his claim to superior powers of observation is outlawed by the fact that he cannot represent even crudely what he thinks he sees. The chief reason for this lies in the fact that he does not see clearly as to proportion and detail. As a matter of fact the vast majority of people do not see with the eye, but with the mind and they therefore see things as they know them to be and not as they really appear to the organ of vision.

Color offers the best example of this failure to truly observe what we look at and accept

literally the version of the eye. Thus, knowing that grass is green and that snow is white upon close examination, most people see it that way under any and all conditions and it is necessary to call their attention and require them to look very closely before they can detect blue shadows on the grass, or purple ones in snow, or observe the thousand tints of rose and gold which this highly refractory medium offers. When we approach sculpture there are many more complicated contradictions between what is and what is seen, which require a most scientific explanation, and this the author of the paper under consideration has accomplished with the utmost clarity.

One of the great advantages of art, to those who study it sincerely with the desire to understand and enjoy, is the deeper appreciation and enjoyment of nature which a knowledge of art affords. Pictures and sculpture are the carefully recorded impressions of men whose life work is to see, and by studying them we are reminded of the existence in the world about us of many beauties which we have passed over or missed entirely. The contemplation of works of art gradually trains the eye to some measure of the artist's power of observation and one begins to see on every hand charming things which have before escaped both the eye and the mind. We find the flat and uninteresting prairie landscape, the smoky prospect of railroad yards and muddy streams with slow-going boats, the plain faces, angular forms and dull coloring of people whom we have never considered as possessing any claims to good looks, all becoming interesting and finally charming, under the tutelage of artists as expressed in their recorded observations. It is therefore impossible to recommend too highly works like the paper which follows as it is through them that the mind is awakened to the necessity of educating and depending upon the eye.

This chapter is only a minute portion of the eight hundred pages which comprise the extensive and exhaustive resume of "*The Fine Arts*" with their six hundred beautiful illustrations, among which are twelve exquisite photogravures.